

December 17, 1998

**EXTENSION OF VA'S AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE COUNSELING SERVICES AND
TREATMENT TO VETERANS FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive notifies Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare personnel that VA's existing authority to provide counseling and medical services for sexual trauma has been extended until December 31, 2001.

2. POLICY: It is VHA policy to provide counseling and treatment to any veteran who while serving on active duty experienced sexual trauma and requires counseling or treatment to overcome psychological trauma which resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty. VA provides:

a. Counseling services to overcome psychological trauma that in the judgement of a mental health professional, employed by the Department, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty.

b. Appropriate care and services for an injury, illness, or other psychological condition that the Secretary determines to be the result of sexual trauma.

3. ACTION: Network and VA healthcare facility Directors are to ensure that counseling and medical services are made available to any veteran who requires such care.

4. REFERENCE: Title 38 United States Code 1720D, Counseling and treatment for sexual trauma.

5. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Director, Health Administration Service (10C3) is responsible for the contents of this directive.

6. RESCISSION: This VHA Directive will expire on December 31, 2001.

S/ by Thomas Garthwaite, M.D. for
Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 12/18/98
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200-FAX 12/21/98
EX: Boxes 104, 88, 63, 60, 54, 52, 47, and 44-FAX 12/21/98

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2001